The
COMMONWEAL

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Roll Back and Hold

THE COAL strike has dramatized the fact that the United States is unable to hold the line on food prices. The rationing of certain foods and the accumulation of mass purchasing power have so accelerated demand for unrationed foods as to send prices kiting. How mountainous they are is a matter of some dispute, but taking into account the methods, studies and estimates of the AFL, the CIO and the official Bureau of Labor Statistics it is safe to say that at current writing American food prices are up about one third since the start of the war. With the huge accumulation of purchasing power now on hand, and building up even further, this is hardly holding the line against inflation.

It is obvious that the time has come for the adoption of a new over-all policy on wages and prices. A program of halfway shreds and patches is clearly unequal to the job. Walter Lippmann in his syndicated column is now insisting that some version of the successful British system of stabilized wages and retail prices, with government subsidies to make up for all inequities, is the only way open in this crisis.

And Canada has succeeded in keeping the rise in her cost of living index down to 16.7 percent for the whole war period, although she has been in the fight now for three and one-half years as compared to our own seventeen months. Her methods are somewhat similar to Britain's. A Wartime Prices and Trade Board, focusing on retail prices, has set prices on a basis of the fall of '39, and has held to this principle. What rise in the index has occurred is due largely to the fact that ceilings apply only to a long list of "essentials"—a list, by the way, subject to change when necessary.

To make this work, subsidies are granted after a minimum of red tape to producers and processors who demonstrate their need. And in certain special cases wage subsidies have been granted. In the last war Canada was in the fight much longer than we were, and the people of the Dominion have not forgotten what they suffered from inflation. Indeed the cooperation of the public has much to do with the success of the present Canadian system. We should learn from their anti-inflation experience as well as Britain's, and devise a watertight program of our own.

The labor press reports that William Green and Philip Murray are insisting that current prices must be reduced. Unfortunately Americans generally are too apathetic about recurrent danger of inflation. We kick about prices of certain foodstuffs we want. But we do not realize the key inflationary rôle of such high prices. They must gradually, perhaps, but surely be rolled back to figures of September 15, 1942, or thereabouts. Prices must be stabilized with wages and a simple means of procuring necessary subsidies set up to keep the system operating on all cylinders. At this juncture we can no longer count on a "pass, a punt and a prayer."

More of the Same

THE 15-day truce on the coal front has solved nothing but the immediate crisis, and it is more than possible that there will be a strike on May 17. Actually, the personal bitterness seems to have increased, and while John L. looks grim and says nothing, other union representatives mutter "double cross" and refer to the events of Sunday, May 3, as "the most colossal trick of history."

Possibly Secretary Ickes promised Lewis more than he had authority to promise. Possibly the two eminent "curmudgeons" just didn't understand each other. Possibly Lewis invented a misunderstanding in order to justify his sending the men back to work. In any case he claims he left the meeting with the impression that the miners would negotiate a contract directly with the Government as the new operators of the mines, and that thus he would be able to by-pass the War Labor Board, winning a major moral victory if nothing else.

But the President's speech Sunday night, upholding the authority of the WLB, gave a very different impression, and on Tuesday, May 5, Secretary Ickes formally denied that he had made any commitments to Lewis about by-passing the Board or negotiating an agreement.

ST. CHARLES SEMINARY

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The situation was further confused by highly sloppy reporting in the New York papers, including the *Times,* which should have known better. Nearly all reports made the guess that a compromise was being cooked up on the basis of a guaranteed six-day week, which would increase the miners' "take-home" pay from $35 (5-day week) to $45.50 (6-day week), or as some very foolishly concluded, the equivalent of $2.10 raise per day and a complete victory for Mr. Eyebrows. Only Wednesday did it come out that 95 percent of the miners were already working six days, and that only a guarantee of 52 six-day weeks a year would interest the union.

The tragedy of the whole thing is that beneath and behind Lewis's mad scramble for power and his personal fight with the President there stand half-a-million miners who have been consistently kicked around, exploited and underpaid. There is no question about it: in strict justice miners *should* get an average of $50 for a five-day week. The point is, however, that the miners' country, America, is fighting for its life in "the most colossal war of history," that part of that fight is the battle against a soaring cost of living on the home front, and that finally this battle would almost certainly be lost if the miners were to be given a substantial increase at this time.

There is, however, one hopeful element in the whole mess: time has been won for the WLB to hand down a decision. By granting other concessions to the miners—such as a guaranteed annual wage, elimination of charges for material and equipment, and/or the unionization of 50,000 mine foremen—the Board may be able to dig the ground from under Lewis's feet and fashion a settlement that the miners themselves and public opinion would force him to accept.

The only other alternative seems to be another strike, more disruption of the war effort, more black eyes for labor, more bloody noses for the miners, more bitterness all around. From this alternative, may we be delivered.

Atmosphere for a New Line

MAY DAY seems to have inaugurated a new dispensation in Moscow. Mr. Stalin's tone in his order of the day certainly was far different from that which he assumed earlier this year; and Admiral Standley is pleased; General Sikorski seems calmer. The Russian press, of course, reflects this attitude, and, most encouraging of all, it is also reflected in the utterances of the Polish Government in Exile. All this is to the good. Naturally honied words cannot in themselves solve problems, but they can create an atmosphere in which to accomplish that most desirable result.

The question of the western frontiers of Russia is still a question. The attitude of the Russian government toward Poles remaining under its control is still not satisfactory to the Poles themselves. Relations between the two governments are still suspended. So that a realist might sneeringly remark that everything is just as bad as it ever was. And yet the words are sweeter, and a true realist must admit that words have their own peculiar power, in their own sphere, to influence events.

We still believe that both British and American policy toward Russia should be much franker and more explicit than it is. We still believe that both governments of the large western democracies should make clear their attitude, especially while they yet possess the great bargaining power of "lend-lease" shipments. And since the atmosphere seems now to be milder and more springlike, is not the present an excellent moment to do a spring paint job on our relations with Russia?

At Home and Abroad

DREW MIDDLETON has been ably reporting the war ever since it started, and he now has summed up his impressions of the American soldier abroad for the New York *Times* (May 2). There is no question as to the men's gallantry and determination. When they reached the combat areas there had to be, of course, "adjustments to reality" because "patriotic advertisements and ill-advised oratory" had led them to be extremely unprepared to find that the Germans were well equipped, that British infantry could be both brave and effective, that the Spitfire was respected by the Germans more than any other plane. All that is known: there is nothing in his report to create the slightest anxiety as to the conduct of our troops in what they will have to do to win the war. But Drew Middleton is worried about something else: he is worried at what he calls their "apathy" toward the ideas that lie back of the war and that must influence the peace. He says: "But only among our own people, most of whom have had more formal schooling than their allies or enemies, does this reporter encounter the idea that the war is a tremendous football game, and that, somehow, after it is over and won, the soldiers can forget the war and the conditions which caused it. . . . To most soldiers [fascism] is some sort of politics practiced by the Germans and Italians. . . . Some domestic brand tricked out with patriotic slogans and stars and stripes might not be understood for what it is."

Well, Mr. Middleton is talking about soldiers who are facing death. It's too bad that they do not think more about the future of the world, about the meaning of the struggle in which many of them will die. But when we read his article, we did not think of the soliders abroad: we thought of the civilians at home, of the voters at home: we thought that this article was a warning to us at home—not to the soldiers abroad.

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French Policy

DEEP CONCERN over the fate of France is not the exclusive privilege of Frenchmen. I believe it not only inevitable but right that European peoples should mind each other's business. If citizens won't, then dictators will. Just as an Italian now goes on record for the American people, in all trust and friendship, against present plans for France, he hopes that some day French voices and American voices will be similarly raised in behalf of Italy. It is civilization, and not this or that country, which is at stake.

The intentions of the American government are honorable beyond doubt. It is sure it wants a France restored to her unity and traditional standing. In polite but slightly impatient expectancy, it looks forward to the time when Frenchmen will forget those eternal bickerings that marked an unfortunate political era; in this it is backed up by public opinion, which, wise in the ways of democracy and constructive compromise, is asking two distinguished but mule-headed generals to forget their personal quarrel. *Vichyssois qui mal y pense.*

This is all understood. Yet some of us feel it our duty to say it is all wrong, to say: Watch out! Dangerous crossing! Stop. Look. Listen.

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Just listen. Listen to the wave of whispers issuing from the reeds along the Potomac shore. Why such a well-organized smear job? Well, read the Krocks, the Forrest Davises, the spokesmen and interpreters. Read their sales-talk on policies that pay and on the need for stability, their presentation of the dauntless and liberal-minded Giraud as contrasted with the "aggressive, troublesome and ambitious" character of the other general, who seems unfortunately "to be more interested in political power than in military achievement . . ."

Consider finally the hard facts: the exclusion of de Gaulle from North Africa; the maneuver aimed at cornering him in the alternative of having to renounce his political responsibilities and vanish as a subordinate in the Giraud army, or the shame of military inactivity in London; the piece of sharp practice by which they filched away Guiana from him (through a procedure borrowed rather from the Robber Barons of the nineties than from the arsenal of diplomatic usage); consider the pressure brought to bear on the British Cabinet, the telegram signed Eisenhower, of which Eisenhower seemed to know nothing; consider the plan now being launched for a cabinet composed of colonial governors and Peyroutons; consider these things and many others, and you will begin to wonder.

Mr. Hull claims that it means he is only interested in waging the war. If that is so, he might, for instance, have reserved a few seats in clippers for intelligence officers understanding German and Italian, and thus have been spared the Kasserine flop, instead of claiming priority space for improvised "colonels" culled from gilt-edged law firms in New York; he might have called to lead the French forces the French general who was one of the creators of modern military doctrine, instead of digging out and setting up against him an egregiously captured officer of ancient vintage, and one who, as a majority member of the *Conseil Supérieur de la Guerre,* was among those chiefly responsible for French military incapacity.

The Washington statesmen are not so absent-minded as they pretend to be. They ask us to consider the political factors, the limited number of available alternatives, the delicate situation. And then comes the clinching argument: de Gaulle is unpopular. The French don't want him. It might be asked who tried to black him out, who tried to stamp him as a British puppet by refusing to recognize him and recognizing against him first Vichy and then Darlan. But that might seem invidious. Let us rather ask: who are the French for the State Department? This is the serious problem. They are, it will be candidly answered, the people who followed the French government. Thus the argument becomes circular. They are those who stand for order, for continuity, for honest business; they are the law-abiding, the practical-minded, the serious; those who clung to the symbol of national unity and tried reconstruction. There you are. One cannot blame the political strategists if they look for friends abroad just where the normal citizen would. It is a fair inference that Mr. Murphy himself was surprized by the subsequent behavior of his "invaluable contacts." And so must home officials have been surprized, after dining and wining the French naval officers, to meet for the first time a mental pattern which to us Europeans is only too familiar: the snarling contempt, the distorted, lucid hatred closed to fact or reason, prompted by a kind of frightful automatism in finding ever new pretexts for animadversion or derision. This is the pattern we shall find among "our friends"; the sour defeated refusal of a world they did not know how to cope with—either that, or flattery and sycophantism.

★

Is that the France we meant? Actually, for most people, what did it mean, taken deep down below the level of conscious phrase-making? It meant good living, cuisine, and Gallic naughtiness. It meant maybe a dozen unread classics and talked-of painters—and the inevitable Maupassant.

The gulf between civilizations has been steadily widening.

But let us go further—what did France mean to Frenchmen themselves? "Le peuple français

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menacé de toutes parts, trahi de toutes mains, se trahissant soi-même . . ." These somber lines were written by Péguy in August, 1914. Now the facts are there for us all to see. It was the malady of Europe as a whole, and not of France alone.

What does it mean then, stability? If out of the rotten carcass of that society, new life must be brought forth, its humble beginnings lie the way the Fighting French are at least trying to go. It is a way of life which implies setting up rigid allegiance to the given word, undeviating strictness, respect for the simple clarity and ancient certainties of the French mind. It involves the resolution, let us not say to *forget* class differences, for that would be flannel-mouthed mush after what happened, but to weld them in a new-found will to fundamental justice. As a way of life, it implies a mode of behavior, a certain candid absolutism, a refusal to compromise on essentials, a rigorism which may appear either simple-minded, or punctilious and stand-offish.

It means, above all, respecting the independence and the wishes of the living part of France, which is the French underground.

At this point, the Washington statesmen have thought it wise to inflict on de Gaulle an icy snub. The idea of having the underground represented is waved off. There is just no correct procedure for it. The underground is something that knows no law and order. Will the General please proceed to Algiers and settle down to the business of waging the war, which, as things are now, means agreeing to be represented by a couple of men in a government of a dozen colonial governors of the most authentic Vichy gold braid. When de Gaulle states that he had much rather stay out of the whole combination and good luck to all, he is declared un-democratic and impossible.

Look instead at Giraud. He has shown cooperation. Maybe he didn't like the soup, but in the end he ate it. One spoonful for Uncle Franklin, one for Uncle Winnie, one for Aunt Democracy—and now the statesmen are proudly waving the empty plate. Maybe Giraud still does not like the whole business. Maybe Governor Boisson is right, when he asserts officially in Dakar that Giraud is still for Pétain, that he did not dare to ask him, Boisson, to remove the portraits of the Marshal. But Giraud is safe. He is a practical soldier, interested only in military matters. Reliable. Sound. There was not even a peep out of him *à propos* of all that financial mixup in North Africa. He listened to Mr. Murphy telling him, as Abetz used to tell Darlan: "You don't know what is good for you." And like Darlan, he understood. When he enters France as the one glorious and ballyhooed conqueror, bringing the French what is more than meat and drink to them—victory, he will persuade them to elect the right people. What between his half-million African troops and the food weapon, they will set up a sound, stable, streamlined, dehydrated, de-caffeinized, easily digested government. Sales management has a word for it: they call it customer conditioning.

Later, much later, Americans will be asking themselves in deep puzzlement why it was that Europe exploded in their faces. It has always been, they will say, an impossible continent.

GEORGE DE SANTILLANA.

(This subject will be discussed next week by C. G. Paulding.)

Shall Germany Pay?

Discussion of a controversial matter.

By **J. L. Benvenisti**

THE FIENDS in human shape who decide these things at the British War Office, having formed the opinion that the cup of human agony is not yet sufficiently full, directed me recently to lecture on "Britain and the U.S.A." My fate should constitute a frightful warning against careless talk. I have never been in America—except on one occasion when in a moment of pardonable inadvertence I got myself born in Atlantic City. But I have always been interested in American history, and a chance conversational allusion to this fact has now brought about the appalling result I have recounted.

To tell the truth, I am far from being an expert, but I have found that it pays in Britain to know a little of this subject since hardly anybody else knows anything about it at all. Indeed I discovered long ago that one can acquire the most incredible prestige by explaining to astonished and delighted audiences (with the aid of diagrams, if necessary) that Arnold Bennett and Benedict Arnold were two entirely separate and distinct individuals.

However, there is compensation in everything, and my lecturing has brought me up against a very curious and persistent myth, namely that the Amer-

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icans refused to sign the Treaty of Versailles because of its allegedly vindictive character. I have even heard it said that President Wilson shook the dust of Versailles from his feet because the European statesmen refused to attune themselves to his high idealism.

Leaving aside for a moment a certain perceptible element of historical inaccuracy in these little tales, I am recording them as examples of a curious tendency to moral masochism in our collective outlook, about which I think it is high time that something should be done.

The thing takes the most varied forms of which perhaps the commonest finds expression in the following fashion: "Germany's outbreak is really our own fault. Had we not imposed vindictive reparations, Germany would never have nurtured the spirit of revenge, and Hitler, who is simply the embodiment of the national resistance to Versailles, would never have come to power."

There are two reasons why I object to this sort of thing. First of all it is historically bosh, and secondly it is the crudest type of propaganda deliberately designed and propagated to weaken the war will of the United Nations. It is also quite certainly intended to defeat the ends of elementary justice.

I do not believe that I am an exceptionally vindictive man, and if I were, I should not use the medium of a Catholic paper to give vent to my feelings. I merely do not see why I should be compelled both to besmirch my friends and to ask for the ordinary moral and juridical duties of restitution to be set aside out of sheer magnanimity to the aggressor, for that is what it really amounts to. I need hardly point out that all this rigmarole ends up with one unvarying chorus line. "There shall be no reparations after this war."

Well, I just don't see it.

The fact is, this whole argument is a kind of skyscraper of fallacies, and I think I can do no better than to get down straight away to the foundation stone, the kernel of the matter, which is the allegedly vindictive strangulation of Germany by impossible reparations payments after the last war. The truth about that is very simple. Germany never paid any reparations. She completely and successfully evaded them. I do not hold that against her in the least. I am not for the moment inveighing against Germany on that account. I am merely rebutting the charge that Britain, America or anybody else encompassed Germany's economic ruin, nor do I propose to argue about this matter at any great length. I will just state the facts.

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Germany paid between 1918 and 1931 a matter of slightly less than 5 billion dollars. She borrowed, largely from small British and American investors, between 1924 and 1929, a sum variously assessed between 5 billion and 7 billion dollars. Let's call it 6 billion dollars. When investors began to get anxious about their money she sent Dr. Schacht over to explain that unless reparations payments ("political payments" as Dr. Schacht called them) were cancelled she would not be able to meet her commercial debts. Largely as a result of this, reparations were cancelled in 1932 which, please note, was well before Hitler came to power.

Having thus made her indebtedness a pretext for defaulting on reparations there was then only one thing left to do which was to default on the whole of her debt. Net result: having paid out about 5 billion dollars and pocketed about 6 billion, Germany was about a billion dollars to the good on the deal.* So much for the brutal and vindictive exactions of the Allies, who had foolishly supposed that having won the war they could expect Germany to make good some of the wanton damage she had inflicted.

These are the plain facts of the matter which can be verified from any reliable book of reference. Oh, I know all about Germany's claim to have paid much more than we said she did. Some greenhorn threw that up at me recently in a newspaper controversy over here. He did not know the source he was quoting from, of course, though I knew it very well. It was the celebrated German Government declaration made through the Wolff Telegraphic Bureau in 1931. That document listed as reparations among other things a sum of 350 million dollars for the German Battle Fleet which the Germans themselves scuttled in Scapa Flow. It also claimed a sum of 1,250 dollars for civilian property left behind in Belgium by the German armies of occupation. Who said the Germans lacked a sense of humor?

Well, that is over and done with now and we can afford to laugh. Even those who lost their money can be exhorted to let bygones be bygones and be wiser next time. But why in the name of common sense should we blackguard ourselves about it?

Then there is that little matter of the German inflation, another bull propaganda point for Germany, of course. The German inflation was undoubtedly a fact and the suffering and hardship

*I must point out that this takes no account of a German claim for 2 billion dollars for German property seized by the Allied countries on the outbreak of the war. This claim, though rejected by the Reparations Commission, is rather surprisingly admitted by the Washington Institute of Economics. The fact is that much German property in the United States was liquidated by Germany before America came into the war to obtain foreign exchange, while that in Britain was seized and offset against the claims of British nationals having property in Germany in accordance with the terms of the Treaty. In all these circumstances it is inconceivable that a balance of 2 billion dollars would have been available, and a number of experts whom the writer has consulted agree that the Reparations Commission is substantially right and that the German claim is preposterous.

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caused by it were also facts. It reduced great masses of the professional and middle classes to beggary. It also weighed very heavily on the working classes. It also was a financial paradise for anybody who could get credit, or hold goods, namely, the German industrialist. If you could get credit at your bank you bought machinery, then when the debt fell due you paid it back with money that had declined to anything between a half and a tenth of its original value. Somebody was really paying for this, of course, and it was the German middle and working classes who had had their purchasing power transferred to industry. I know that this was happening because I was in Germany myself and saw it happening time and again. German industry was in clover. Among other things it cleared off all its mortgage and debenture charges and the nation held the baby.

It is obvious that this whole business was quite deliberate. Enormous sums were paid out to German industry by the German government, which raised the money by increasing the note circulation. For instance, a vast sum was paid out to the German shipping companies in 1921 on their agreement to replace within ten years the tonnage ceded by them in compensation of Allied tonnage sunk by U-boats. In actual fact the whole of this tonnage was replaced not in ten years but in two, and German shipowners, having palmed off their own uneconomic crocks onto their victors, were already taking the trade of those victors away with new, fast and highly modern ships.

Again we can afford to laugh. The Germans won that trick and won it by skilful play, and we can say, without stretching the canons of morality unduly, by *fair* play. I do not approve myself of government subsidies, but I have yet to learn that they violate the Ten Commandments. But why on earth should we do public penance because the Germans put it over on us?

Let us pursue the matter further. Stinnes demanded compensation for his ceded property in Northern France, Belgium, Luxembourg and Lorraine. Stinnes got compensation thanks to the printing press, and thanks to that compensation he was able to found a vast industrial empire with provinces in Austria (where he acquired the Alpine Montan Company, iron mines, the Ill Water Power Works, a handful of paper works and a combine of newspapers), in Hungary, Rumania, Holland, Sweden, Italy, Denmark, Russia and the Dutch East Indies—not bad for the magnate of a defeated country! In these circumstances it is not surprising that Germany's expenditure, even if calculated in gold marks, was during the inflation period vastly in excess of her pre-war expenditure and of course somebody was footing the bill.

The truth is, of course, that during these years Germany was engaged in a gigantic overhaul of the whole of her industrial machine and laid a part of the foundations (the rest was laid later by means of fantastic subsidies) of her subsequent rearmament. She had completely re-equipped and modernized her railway system by 1923, and it is significant that the first commercial loan made after the signature of the Dawes Agreement was a loan of 10 million dollars to Krupps.

All good things come to an end at some time and an end came to the German inflation. And from that time onwards Germany recapitalized herself by borrowing from her victors — with highly agreeable results. From 1924 onwards Germany began to enjoy a period of unprecedented prosperity. By 1928 the German national income, despite a loss of territory, had risen to 75 percent above the 1913 level, against a rise in the cost of living of 40 percent. She had, it is true, no surplus for foreign investment, but this in part was responsible for the higher share in the total obtained by wage and salary owners. It has been estimated that the income of the latter was 100 percent above that of 1913. Actually Germany's real income per head was higher than that of France.

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So much for the economic strangulation by the Treaty of Versailles. But there were elements in Germany that were determined neither to forgive nor to forget, and when I speak of forgiving or forgetting I do not mean forgiving or forgetting the Treaty of Versailles; I mean forgiving and forgetting the military defeat by her enemies. Indeed one may well say that if the Treaty of Versailles had never been signed it would have been necessary to invent it. Hitler himself bears eloquent, if unwitting, testimony to the wholly artificial nature of the agitation against the Treaty, and what is even more startling, to that agitation's complete lack of success in its early stages. Writing of his early campaigning days round about 1923 he speaks in "Mein Kampf" as follows:

"In those days if anyone mentioned Versailles at one of our meetings somebody in the audience would be sure to get up and shout out 'What about Brest-Litovsk . . .?' One felt inclined to dash one's head against a wall with such people. They would not realize that Versailles was a shame and a disgrace."

During a long and laborious career Herr Hitler has striven to correct this defect and he has striven successfully. He has made of Versailles exactly what he intended to do, a kind of symbol and spur. It has fitted admirably into his plans. But he seems to have been very frank about the part he had cast it for when talking to his initiates.

"The struggle against Versailles," he said to Rauschning, "is the means but not the end of my policy."

And there were many in those days to help him.

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I defy anybody who was in Germany in the post-war years to deny the existence of a savage and vindictive determination that was working underground, yet erupted here and there and struck one in the face like a hot wind. It came from one part of the nation, from the old military Junker quarter, but it never relented.

I remember once talking to a German landed proprietor in whose house I was a guest for a day or two. Neither he nor any of his kin had suffered through the mark collapse. On the contrary, he, like the rest of his class, was doing extremely well, and this was not the language of a man made desperate by circumstances. I remember this man saying to me "I am bringing up my children with only one idea—to hate every Frenchman that they meet." This was the spirit which made use of Hitler and lifted him to greatness. Here you have the one reality of the matter. All the rest is flumdiddle and ballyhoo,—like Hitler's claim to (God save the mark) be a bulwark against Bolshevism or a social reformer.

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Nobody suggests that the Versailles Treaty was a masterpiece of human wisdom. Nobody suggests that there was not among the people of the belligerent countries a passing phase of vindictiveness after the war (they would have been more than human had it been otherwise). But nobody who knows the facts will deny that this spirit was surprisingly shortlived, and that in the main the statesmen of Versailles sought to set their faces against popular clamor (Italy who was least advantaged by the Peace was on the whole a discreditable exception) and that they sought to postpone decisions to give passion time to cool. On the whole little hardship was inflicted on Germany, and where such hardship existed it was in due course set aside by successive modifications of terms. Nobody who knows history will deny that long before Hitler came to power Stresemann was, in the teeth of Junker opposition, steadily cementing the bonds of better understanding with Briand across the border and that this better understanding was rendered impossible by the growing nazi tornado at the polls from 1930 onward.

Now the first reason why I object to the "poor ruined bankrupt Germany" type of propaganda is the one I have already stated. I do not see that the cause of justice is advanced, or my own intellectual integrity safeguarded by accusing my country of a piece of infamy of which in the main she is completely innocent.

I categorically deny that Britain has shown herself vindictive toward Germany, and incidentally I deny that France has been vindictive. France has shown a pardonable preference for surviving and sought (in the main rather ineffectively) to retain in her hands the necessary weapons against the power that showed every sign of wanting to prevent her from surviving.

But there is another consideration. Quite frankly, there is every sign of certain agencies being at work which are determined that, if and when Germany is defeated, nothing shall be done to impair her control of territory, or her economic, that is to say her potential military resources. There is at this moment quite obviously a shadow government of Germany forming, and it is forming, of course, outside Axis territory. It will naturally enough repudiate the grosser abominations of nazi ideology, but it will leave the eternal German problem completely unsolved, and in twenty years' time, if it should get to power, we shall have the same miserable business all over again. I intend to do my insignificant best to help in preventing that happening.

Now the reparations question is an extremely good test in this matter, and I strongly urge anybody who sees these lines to be very careful of any agency that is deliberately carrying on a campaign to prevent reparations being exacted at the end of this war, or that is spreading the story that reparations in the past had anything to do with this outbreak. It is a lie that reparations in the past ruined Germany or sowed the seeds of an unquenchable animosity which would have been present in any case. It is a moral lie to say that when she is defeated Germany either could or should not pay reparations again. People who talk like this are either themselves the dupes of persons whose policy, if effective, will bring about the ruin of mankind, or they are in league with such persons.

If it be objected that Germany is at the moment a victim of a totalitarian tyranny and that it is unjust to exact penalties from people who act as they do under the threat of torture and death, my answer is very simple. If there is any validity in the "good" and "bad" Germany theory—and it is a theory to which I personally subscribe—if it is true that millions of Germans secretly detest Hitler and all his works, then surely those very Germans will be glad to make a gesture of repudiation at the first moment they are able to do so, and that gesture will surely be to make some kind of reparation to Hitler's victims. That will be the acid test of their sincerity.

To make my position quite clear I want to say that I do not believe that the individual German is a monster of wickedness. I have had many German friends, some of whom are in exile, while others, I have no doubt, are Heil-Hitlering with the rest. Let him who would blame them search his own heart as to what he would do in the circumstances.

I do not want to see Germans deprived of their nationhood, their independence or the means of a

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decent life. I do want to see them deprived of their armaments and of the means of getting hold of any fresh ones. If the Germans don't like that then that will be just too bad. They will have to put up with it as I have to put up with not having a Cadillac. They will have to be content with the next best thing which is having their frontiers guaranteed by the United Nations, who will certainly insist on some kind of inspection and control of their heavy and engineering industries. But above all I want Germany to have to pay because her ready and sincere acceptance of that condition will be the test of her wholehearted repudiation of her own past, and will be some proof of her acceptance of the kind of world we ordinary people want to live in.

I don't want Germany crushed under a burden of debt. The harm she has done is in any case beyond anything that money can pay for. Money will not give back life to the millions of innocent human beings she has murdered in cold blood. But I do want the gesture made. I want Germany to pay within the reasonable limits of her capacity.

And if any banker or financier here tells me that this will raise transfer difficulties and interfere with trade and that no suitable means can be found to make a free gift of goods and services available between one community and another, then I suggest that all the bankers and financiers should charter a liner and jump into the sea in mid-Atlantic. But of course this necessity will not arise. The bankers know perfectly well that it can be done. If they don't I shall be happy to advise them for a purely nominal fee.

Nicolaus Copernicus

Four hundred years have passed since a great priest-scientist revolutionized astronomy.

By **Marta Wankowicz**

IN A city where half the houses are now but a pile of bricks, not far from the wrecked building of the American Embassy, within a block of the gates of the University of Warsaw where German guards are posted today, there is a monument, sculptured by the Dane, Thorwaldsen. It is one of very few monuments in Poland—perhaps the only one today—that German wrath has spared. The statue of Christ the King in Poznań was pulled down from its pedestal and demolished mercilessly. The monument of Kosciuszko, who dedicated his life to the cause of independence of the United States and of his own native land, was blown up with dynamite in Krakow. The monument of Kiliński, the cobbler who led one of the Polish insurrections, was destroyed in Warsaw.

That solitary monument still resisting the Germans stands alone in the midst of the most demolished street of Warsaw, prophetically named *Nowy Swiat,* the New World. It is the monument of a man at whose bidding "the sun stopped and the earth began to spin," of a man whose spirit and genius overcame ignorance and persecution—Nicolaus Copernicus.

News lately came from Poland telling how it happened that the monument of Copernicus has been spared by the Germans: they have made him a *Volksdeutsche,* a "fellow-countryman." On the monument, erected in Warsaw by popular subscription among the Poles on the eve of the Insurrection of 1831, the Germans blotted out the words: "Nicolai Copernico, Grata Patria," and the Polish inscription: "To Mikolaj Kopernik from His Compatriots." Instead they substituted an inscription of their own: "To Nicolaus Copernicus, from the German Nation."

Thus Copernicus survived in a city condemned to death by the Germans, in a country where among other schools and universities, his own Alma Mater, the University of Krakow, has been closed for the first time in 575 years.

In the middle of the fourteenth century a branch of the old Silesian family of Koperniks moved to Krakow, ancient capital of Poland. In 1396 they were granted Krakow citizenship and settled there to become in time wealthy merchants. They had lived in Krakow for nearly a century when an important historical event took place. In 1454 the Union of Pomeranian Territories, including the cities of Torun and Danzig, revolted against the Teutonic Order and sought protection against the Knights' harsh rule from powerful and tolerant Jagellonian Poland. A few years later, about 1458, Copernicus the Elder moved from Krakow to Torun, and it was in this city that in 1473 Nicolaus Copernicus was born, unaware of how much bitter controversy would have been avoided had he been born in Krakow. Unaware also that, had he been born in Krakow, his beautiful monument in Warsaw would have been destroyed by the Germans 500 years later.

In the same year in which the *Santa Maria,*

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Pinta and *Niña* approached the American shores, Nicolaus Copernicus entered the gates of the University of Krakow, the oldest Polish university, endowed with the jewels of the beloved and saintly Queen Jadwiga of Poland.

In the fourteen nineties the University of Krakow boasted among its professors the renowned mathematician and astronomer, Albert Brudzewski, a humanist. Brudzewski had a strange and fascinating power over his students. His brilliant intellect captivated their minds to such a degree that after many a lecture fist fights broke out in the streets of Krakow, the students settling on a more down-to-earth level the argument started in Brudzewski's class.

In September, 1494, Marcin Bylica, an astronomer himself and an alumnus of the *Alma Mater Cracoviensis,* presented the university with a magnificent gift: four astronomical instruments brought from Buda. They represented the last word in science and stirred such admiration that the Rector called a special student assembly to look at the wondrous creations: a large celestial globe, two astrolabes and a triquetrum.

The very next year, however, Brudzewski left the University of Krakow, where the "scholastics" had temporarily won the battle against the "humanists." Corpernicus left Krakow shortly after his great teacher to pursue his studies at the University of Bologna. At Bologna he enrolled as a student of canon law, following the wish of his uncle, Bishop Lucas Wasselrode. He continued his studies at Rome, Padua, Ferrara, and when he finally returned to Poland to assume his duties as a canon of the duchy-bishopric of Varmia, he returned equipped with the fruits of extensive study in theology, philosophy, logic, medicine, mathematics and astronomy.

In Bologna Copernicus came in contact with Domenico Maria Novara, an unorthodox astronomer who had his own doubts as to the truth of the Ptolemaic, geocentric motion theory which had ruled most learned minds for fourteen centuries. Domenico Maria Novara encouraged Copernicus in his studies of the Pythagorean theory regarding the motion of the earth. It was annoying—the two astronomers agreed—that the great mechanism of the world had not been clearly and satisfactorily explained.

The problem troubled Copernicus when he returned to his duties in Varmia. For the rest of his life he worked hard collecting observations and data, which, after nearly forty years of labor, resulted in "De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium" ("Concerning the Revolutions of the Heavenly Bodies").

These were not years of peaceful work and scientific concentration. Copernicus took active part in the life of his country. He acted as physician and secretary to his uncle, Bishop Lucas Wasselrode, administered the church property of the bishopric of Varmia and took active part in the currency reform of the province, laying down his economic principles in "De Monetae Cudendae Ratio" ("Concerning the Principle of Coining Money"). He also took active part in the political events of the time and participated in armed conflicts against the Teutonic Knights, then headed by Albert von Hohenzollern. The Teutonic Knights did their wicked best to foment disorders in the Polish provinces, and on July 22, 1516, Copernicus addressed a petition to Sigismund I, King of Poland, asking for help in behalf of the Chancery of the Bishopric of Varmia. He ended his complaint against the Teutonic *latrones* (robbers), offering "our loyal services and even our very lives to your Majesty, whom we regard as our most gracious Lord." The churchmen of that time had to be remarkably versatile: when the war with the Teutonic Knights broke out four years later, Copernicus became commander in chief of the city of Olsztyn (Allenstein).

It was not only his country that was attacked and molested by the Teutonic neighbors: his theory was not spared either. The great minds of the Reformation—and, indeed, for a hundred years the schools of Rome itself—aligned to bring Copernicus into ridicule and contempt. This attitude was only natural since the Pole's theory involved something more than astronomy. Ptolemy's theory of geocentric motion flattered man's pride and allayed his fears, placing him in the central position of the universe. The Polish astronomer's concept of heliocentric motion pushed man off his false pedestal and transformed his realm into an insignificant planet, one of many. The new theory made men realize the immensity of the universe and their own insignificance. *"Le silence éternel de ces espaces infinis m'effraie,"* wrote Pascal.

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Luther was emphatic in his condemnation. "People gave ear to an upstart astrologer," he wrote, "who strove to show that the earth revolves, not the heavens, or the firmament, the sun and moon. . . . This fool is trying to overturn the whole art of astronomy. But Sacred Scripture tells us that Joshua commanded the sun to stand still and not the earth." Brilliant Philip Melanchton, Luther's disciple, refers to Copernicus as *ille Sarmaticus Astronomus qui movet terram et figit solem* (that Polish astronomer who moved the earth and stopped the sun) which he considered "a nonsensical thing" (*res absurda*). Calvin quoted Psalm 93: "The world also is established that it cannot be moved," and exclaimed indignantly: "Who will venture to place the authority of a Copernicus above that of the Holy Spirit?" And later Galileo was warned by the authorities at Rome against the Copernican system.

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Something more than an astronomical theory was involved in Copernicus's findings. Dantiscus, at one time ambassador of Sigismund, King of Poland, at the court of Charles V, after his interview with Luther, sums up the conflict between the two great men: "It would be difficult to imagine a more decided contrast betwen these two men the dates of whose births differ in but a few short years. On the one hand we behold reason, through an excessively mystic tendency, enslaved to a blind faith—in fact, stifled; and faith itself, as a consequence, deprived of its foundation, lifeless and powerless. On the other hand, we behold reason in a wisely adjusted harmony with faith and science, triumphing over the dead letter of the Bible, the deceiving testimony of senses, and every other illegitimate influence, and thereby imparting firmness to faith in the supra-sensible and in all real authority."

Copernicus did not shun criticism. Sincerely pious himself he claimed the human right to search for and believe in truth, and could never understand why knowledge should endanger faith. And yet he hesitated with the publication of his life work. It was truly a revolutionary book. Still the Archbishop of Cuhn and the Cardinal of Capua urged him incessantly, and his admiring disciple, young Rheticus, pleaded for the publication. Finally Copernicus decided to print his manuscript, and, through Rheticus, the publication was entrusted, strangely enough, to a Lutheran minister, Andreas Ossianus of Nuremberg. Copernicus dedicated his work to Pope Paul III. "I dedicate my book to Your Holiness," he wrote, "in order that both learned men and the ignorant may see that I do not shrink from judgment and examination. If perchance there be vain babblers who, knowing nothing of mathematics, yet assume the right of judging on account of some place in Scripture perversely twisted to their purpose—I heed them not and look upon their judgments as rash and contemptible."

The publication of "De Revolutionibus" profoundly stirred the contemporary world and provoked violent opposition. German students attacked the printer's shop at the instigation of the University, trying to demolish the press and to destroy the manuscript. The printers had to barricade themselves within in order to finish their work. The people of Nuremberg had a medal struck with ironical inscription directed against Copernicus. The inhabitants of Elbing presented a burlesque play ridiculing the great astronomer. A company of strolling players toured the towns presenting the burlesque in which a Satan, completely equipped with horns, cloven foot and other insignia, directed the action of the pseudo-Copernicus pulling two strings fastened to enormous asses' ears planted on the astronomer's head. In the first scene Copernicus gave his soul to Satan, burnt a copy of the Bible and trampled the crucifix. In the second they had him explain the new system juggling with apples, while resin torches transformed his head into a sun. In the third, they mocked Copernicus's charitable medical services to the poor, presenting him as a charlatan and vendor of quack medicine, and finally portraying him as a drunkard rolling unconsciously under the table. In the fourth scene the action was brought to a climax. Amid sulphurous smoke the devil pronounced his sentence on Copernicus for having caused the earth to turn on its axis: the astronomer was to remain for eternity with his head downwards.

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These schoolboyish pranks must have affected Copernicus painfully, even though he declared his indifference. *"Numquam volui populo placere; nam quae ego scio non probat populus; quae probat populus, ego nescio."*

He fell ill before the printing of his book had been completed. Paralyzed and unconscious, deprived of his keen brilliance and his skilled memory, the great astronomer lay on his deathbed when the first copy of "De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium" reached him on May 23, 1543. They put this claim to immortality in his powerless hands, and he died on that same day which fulfilled his life's dream and his life's work.

With Copernicus's death the new science was born. His genius opened the way for all later researches and laid firm foundations for our knowledge of the modern world.

Over two hundred years passed. On December 11, 1773, a Prussian whom history has called "Great" wrote to his friend, the brilliant cynic Voltaire, about a country which he had "rescued from tyranny": about Poland whose bleeding body he had dismembered in the first partition. In his letter Frederic the Great referred to Poland as *"un pays qui avait produit un Copernic,"* a country which produced Copernicus.

Another two hundred years passed. The heirs of Frederic rob Poland today even of the name of her faithful son. And yet on May 24, the Quadricentennial Anniversary of his death, Nicolaus Copernicus will be perhaps forgotten by the German nation who has dedicated the Polish monument in Warsaw to him. But on this day he will not be forgotten by his own *grata Patria,* grateful motherland, whose name he made glorious, whose soil he defended with his sword and whose protection against the Teutonic robbers he sought. And he will not be forgotten by a country which on his globe had been marked as the newly discovered land: *"America, terra noviter reperta,"* and which, coming of age, claimed, like Copernicus, the human right to believe in truth.

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Why Christian Unions?

By PAUL VIGNAUX

ONE FEATURE in the progress of European labor at the end of the first World War was the growth of a trade union movement which drew its inspiration from Christianity and more specifically from Catholic social doctrine. Before discussing this movement I shall give the following data. In 1920 and 1922, unions of German Christian workers (not including white collar or state employees) numbered more than a million members; and in order to measure the importance of these Christian unions in relation to the "free" unions (socialist) it must be noted that the membership of Christian labor unions was concentrated in the Catholic regions of Germany, especially in the west, and that in the mining regions, for example, this membership totaled more than a third of all organized labor. In Italy, the Italian Confederation of Workers had 1,250,000 members in 1919-1922, while the membership of the General Confederation of Labor (socialist) varied between 1,200,000 and 2,500,000.

In France, the Confederation of Christian Workers, organized in 1919, grew steadily up to 1940 and represented between a sixth and a seventh of total union membership. In Belgium, the growth of Christian syndicates brought their numbers to more than 300,000 members, the socialist membership being 600,000. In Holland, the membership of the Catholic unions, together with that of Protestant organizations with which the Catholics collaborated, was just about equal to the membership of the Socialist Confederation. These labor unions, moreover, represented only one aspect of the action carried out by Catholic workers. They also had a strong influence on political parties such as the German Center, Don Sturzo's Popular Party, the Catholic Parties of Belgium and Holland; they were grouped in such organizations as the *Katholische Arbeiter Vereine,* in Germany; the National League of Christian Workers, in Belgium; the Catholic Workers Leagues, in Holland—finally it was in the same circles, in Belgium and France, that the *Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne* (Jocistes) was created and grew rapidly in importance.

The totalitarian wave has submerged these organizations, but the forces to which they gave expression remain intact. And their social tradition still lives. The Italian Confederation of Workers fought Mussolini up to 1925; reports reaching us through the socialist underground show that among the people there still exist in Italy Catholic and anti-fascist centers of resistance. It is also indubitable that the Catholic workers' tradition did not disappear in Germany with the advent of Hitler. In Holland the resistance shown by organizations of Catholic workmen has been splendid in its strength, discipline, and unanimity. In Belgium the Christian trade unionists are as strongly opposed to the "New Order" as are their socialist comrades. And finally, in France, the cooperation between leaders of the *Confédération des Travailleurs Chrétiens* and the *Confédération Générale du Travail* has formed an essential factor in the whole resistance of the labor movement, a factor which neither Pétain's authority nor Laval's cleverness have been able to eliminate.

It is therefore plain that we have here in the existence of this Christian labor movement in Western Europe a social fact which it is impossible to disregard. I use the word Christian rather than the word Catholic. Not only because in Germany the Christian workers' unions included a Protestant minority, and not only because in Holland there existed specifically Protestant organizations, but because in France, for instance, the Christian labor movement was not formed exclusively through the adherence of practicing Catholics. In fact it welcomed and was open to—more and more so as time passed—all workers who approved its principles and action in industrial relations. For labor organization and labor unions are not Catholic Action; they function in the realm of temporal affairs.

Why then did there exist in Europe labor unions which were Christian and even specifically Catholic? That is something which always puzzles English and Americans because they are accustomed to conditions in the labor movement which are fundamentally different. One can answer their question only by recalling a whole historical background.

The pioneers in the Christian labor movement were the Ruhr miners and the textile workers of Ghent who, at the end of the nineteenth century, already possessed a long labor union tradition. As long as their unions remained similar to British unions, these Catholic workmen were active members in them; but when these organizations passed under the control of the socialists of the period, doctrinaire Marxists and violently anti-clerical, the workmen who remained faithful to their religion left their unions and founded—not without considerable hesitation and reflection—unions of their own which declared themselves inspired by Christian social doctrine. In other countries a similar break took place.

The formation of a Christian trade unionism can only be explained by the ideological background of the European labor movement. Fundamentally what took place was a reaction of Christian workingmen against the social-democrat, or syndicalist ideologies of the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. To this conflict of ideas there was added the struggle of the Christian minority to find its place, a place

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which would ensure that its interests were represented, at the side of organizations which in general were numerically more powerful and which were accustomed to speak in the name of the entire working class.

In Europe Christian organizations had acquired, or were acquiring, their rightful position and their proper influence, and they were doing this with the consent of the socialist organizations when the fascist revolution came, or the fascist conquest. Wherever the Christian workers movement represented a real strength in the European countries (where the union shop generally speaking does not exist), the Christian labor unions took part in collective bargaining along with the socialist organizations. The two movements had come much closer to each other, not only because the socialists recognized that the Christian organizations were bona fide labor unions, but because their own ideology had changed. In denouncing the totalitarian tendency of the Communist Party, social democracy was putting a new emphasis on the democratic aspect of its ideology, on the dignity and freedom of individuals, and this brought it nearer to the "personalism" of the Christians, a personalism more and more freed from medieval reminiscences or clerical prejudice. In France the dominating ideology within the *Confédération Générale du Travail* became, between 1919 and 1940, a constructive unionism terminating in a *plan* for the nation's economy which did not greatly differ from the plan of the Christian labor unionists. And to these reasons which furthered an understanding between labor unions one must add a final and dominating factor, the threat and then the dictatorship of fascism which gathered in one single opposing movement all men determined to defend free trade unionism. A common purpose gathered together all the militants of the democratic workers' movement. That is a certain fact, but the question is: will this unity in opposition to dictatorship create one single united labor organization? That question history alone will answer. We shall not attempt to give the answer here and now. But without engaging the future there are certain signposts, certain factors which may be noted.

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Henceforth Christian trade unionism appears as a strong and living party of the workers' democratic movement. When the Christian trade unionists plan, as they do in Belgium and in France, to rebuild their own destroyed organizations as soon as the war is over, they plan also to have these organizations act in full coordination with all other bona fide unions, in a manner that will prevent any rivalry or discord that might weaken the working class in its economic action. The autonomy of Christian organizations, in their minds, springs from and corresponds to an existing diversity in spiritual and cultural tendencies, and provides a greater facility for educational and constructive work. For their part, certain socialist leaders are inclined to admit that a coordination and an agreement with the Christian union leaders would provide a form of unity more effective than that possible in a single united organization in which thousands of militants of very differing traditions and ideologies would find themselves constantly exposed to friction and disagreement. Given the historical background of the European labor movement this attitude appears to me as the wisest and the most realistic. Yet there will be others who will attempt to merge the Christian labor unions into a single national union. The success of this appeal will depend largely on the personality of those who make it. Will they be labor leaders sincerely attached to a conception of political independence of the trade union movement, to the tradition of democracy, to a respect for individual freedom? Will they be men attached to the Communist Party, following a common front policy which has always been opposed by the Catholic workers? Without making any premature forecast it is possible to say at the present time that the essential task is to prepare in a freed Euope the reconstruction of those general conditions of freedom, freedom of speech and of association, which will allow workers of every tendency to choose democratic forms of organization. Rather than to speculate as to the nature of these future forms of organization it is essential to survey the various forces which can act to rebuild a democratic workers' movement. No matter what shape and organization they may adopt in the future, the Christian workers constitute one of these determining forces in Western Europe.

Obviously they constitute a minority movement. But, in democracy, the majority must take into account minorities which can show that they are coherent, stable, capable of intelligent action and sufficient in numbers to make themselves heard.

The Christian labor union minority was not equally distributed throughout Western Europe; it was particularly strong and active in regions which of necessity will be called upon to play a major part in a federal organization of the European "region": Southern Holland, Belgium, Northern France, Alsace-Lorraine, the Rhineland, Northern Italy. Acting as a liaison body between the whole of the democratic labor movement and the forces of progressive Catholics, the Catholic workmen will share in the task of rebuilding Europe, and their action after the war will be simply a continuation of the part they have played in Europe's resistance to the fascist New Order.

Determined and unyielding on democratic principles, but with a strong tendency toward reconciling the workers' claims with a conception of the "common good" of the community, a Christian

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labor movement can be a powerful factor in the rebirth of Europe's labor movement. For this labor movement during the period of reconstruction must act less as a pressure group than as an agent and, if possible, a central element in constructive political union. And here I am thinking of and alluding specially to the "constructive unionism" which was the doctrine launched in France in 1919 by the leaders of the *Confédération Générale du Travail* and which, in many of its aspects, was a forerunner of the New Deal. Europe will find itself living again in freedom but doubtless its awakening to freedom will be in an atmosphere of confusions and passion. Currents of neo-nationalism and of demogoguery will threaten perhaps to break down the first attempts at reconstruction. What will be needed then, and greatly needed, will be popular forces which can further mutual understanding and provide stability. That is why it will be necessary in my opinion to call first of all upon all the men, the militants and the leaders of the democratic labor movement, whether their intellectual formation comes from social democracy, from syndicalism (the socialists) or from Christianity. These men, these leaders, have found that they could work together in resistance to the enemy; they should find, they must find, when the time comes, that they are able to work together in the task of rebuilding Europe. This reconstruction must be based on the deep and mutual desire of all European workers; it must be based—for this is what they desire—on new forms of cooperative economy freed from any and all irresponsible domination. The new forms must be freed from the domination of the great financial and industrial interests as much as from the domination of the totalitarian—and even from the authoritarian state.

The Stage & Screen

The First Million

BETWEEN ages of four and twelve, children, by choice, live in a comic strip world. This comedy belongs among the comic strips. It should delight playgoers who never get beyond the age of twelve. On the assumption that such playgoers cannot afford $3.30, a play like "The First Million" can never succeed on Broadway.

Probably the outstanding fact about "The First Million" is that its producer, Jimmy Elliott, is stated to be only eighteen. He may have been anxious to display his powers before taking a turn with the Army. No other special reason can be assigned for a Broadway production of a harmless piece of nonsense about "Maw" and three of her four sons living in the Ozarks getting together their first million dollars by bank robberies, kidnappings and other trifling misdemeanors. Dorrit Kelton as Maw was

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a sound widow faithful to the words of Paw, who before departing this life with the aid of the hangman had firmly fixed in what passes for Maw's mind the principle that the first and hardest million should be accumulated by expert thievery before any of it should be spent. The fourth son of Maw, honest in a conventional way, was slightly more stupid than the three imitation Dillingers. The action depends on the kidnapping of the local banker (Harlan Briggs), who turns out to be a fairly good swindler on his own account. The playwright hoped to make the audience laugh. Praise him for his excellent intentions. *(At the Ritz.)*

JAMES N. VAUGHAN.

Two Wrapped in Technicolor

"CRASH DIVE" represents one of those wonderful opportunities Hollywood has to make an unusual film; and then it throws originality and honesty to the winds and turns out another bundle of clichés. This film's subject is the submarine, its personnel, the dangers through which they go, the heroism they display in action. But instead of giving us a well documented picture of life at the New London, Connecticut, submarine base (where some of the film was shot) and later on a sub itself, "Crash Dive" is a slick, expensively produced, technicolored love story about two officers who fall for the same girl. Of course it has its moments of excitement. Just after the Commander (Dana Andrews) discovers that his fiancée (Anne Baxter) is in love with his lieutenant (Tyrone Power), the submarine is ordered out on a special job. So with officers Tyrone and Dana glaring at each other like a couple of schoolboys, the submarine starts out to track down the German base in the North Atlantic from which nazi ships, using the Swedish flag as a decoy, have been sailing. They locate the nazi hangout, get into it by a clever ruse, stage a thrilling commando raid in which they blow up oil tanks, ammunition storehouses, ships, practically the whole harbor. In getting back to the sub Lieutenant Tyrone and Negro Ben Carter have to swim like mad through burning oil-covered water; and in getting the submarine, whose periscope is broken, out of the harbor, Commander Dana stands on the submerged sub to guide it through the nazi mine field. The film ends with a burst of flagwaving and praise for submarines, PT boats, carriers, cruisers, dreadnaughts. "They're all in there punching." Archie Mayo, who directed, was no doubt told to concentrate as much on Tyrone, who is very handsome in blues, whites and khakis, as on the submarine which is not always so glamorous. He deserves credit for making the sub more exciting than Ty. Jo Swerling's script works hard to sell submarine service to the audience, in spite of the fact that it admits some of the disadvantages of life-under-the-sea. It might have done better had it omitted a few bromides. The film's one fresh note is its excellent shot of Washington's new Jefferson Memorial.

Without a submarine or even the slightest trace of today's grim reality comes *"White Savage,"* another technicolor job that uses brightest hues to enhance its escapist story. Director Arthur Lubin must have realized that the script didn't make much sense and even had its unintentionally laughable aspects, so he threw caution overboard. Anyway his assignment was to make a picture with Maria Montez, Jon Hall and Sabu and to cash in quickly on the box-office success that trio had in "Arabian Nights." What those three do doesn't matter just as long as they appear in scene after scene. This South Sea idyl is about a Princess and a fisherman and the latter's good friend, a young native scamp who would like the Princess and the fisherman to be good friends too. But a villain, of German descent, wants the Princess because a pool on her island has gold and jewels all over its bottom. Included in the hodge-podge are costumes and sets that belong to no period or place, slinky Montez appearing in a series of vivid sarongs, a couple of good underwater swimming scenes, an exciting episode in which Sabu rescues Hall from a pit full of lions, one lush erotic dance sequence that is a musical comedy travesty on native festivals complete with drums, some incredibly funny lines and some unbelievable melodramatics. It's all pure hokum and will probably make more money at the box office than "Arabian Nights."

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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Editors' Choice

THE LATIN AMERICAN POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES. *Samuel Flagg Bemis. Harcourt.* $4.50.

THE TRAGEDY OF EUROPEAN LABOR, 1918-1939. *Adolf Sturmthal. Columbia.* $3.50.

Living Up to a Middle Name

HISTORIANS, we have always heard, should—whatever else they do—prove themselves exemplars of objectivity. Their job is to dig out the relevant facts regardless of where the lumps fall. Unhappily some of the most famous were anything but unbiased: witness

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Treitschke and the influential German school which combined such meticulousness of detail with passionate nationalism. Nonetheless in American academic circles, while it has been considered ideal to discover a trend as suggestive as that of the influence of the frontier, to start with a thesis and then adduce the supporting facts has always been bad form.

Apparently this does not worry Professor Bemis. He states frankly that the object of his book is "to dispel the widespread conception of 'dollar diplomacy' as a wickedly aggressive instrument of power politics in the selfish hands of Wall Street 'interests' for the economic exploitation of Latin America." He is too competent a scholar and too honest to treat the subject of our relations with the other Americas without mentioning certain unsavory developments. But it is extraordinary the lengths to which he goes in expressing his convictions. To the charge that we have exploited the peoples to the south of us he replies: "It has been the other way around: it is the Latin American governments which have exploited the capital of the United States nationals indiscreet enough to have allowed their property to be trapped within the sovereignty of those nations."

Certain areas of the question apparently never occur to the author of this patriotic study. He does not so much as mention the wages or the working conditions under which so many of the enterprises operated by North American capital extract the natural riches with which many of those Latin countries have been endowed. And unhappily this is an omission which regards not only our darker past but is still true of some of the most vital strategic industries. One might mention, for instance, the working and living conditions accompanying the production of Bolivian tin and Chilean copper and nitrates. How measure this against "trapped capital"?

But to go back to the history of these relations. According to this volume there is really only one black mark on our record—the seizure of the Canal Zone in 1903. Professor Bemis calls it "a great big black mark too." His version has it that there was nothing particularly reprehensible about the Texas-Mexico developments in the 1830's or 40's. In fact, Mexican political folly was equally if not more to blame than the expansionism of "Manifest Destiny." Even our series of interventions in Central America and the West Indies were merely necessary moves to protect the Canal and our sea-borne east to west communications. What for years, then, has been erroneously dubbed "dollar diplomacy" was after all only legitimate defense of vitally strategic military and naval positions. That is the way it looks to Professor Bemis in the light of Pearl Harbor and its aftermath.

In developing his theme, however, the author presents in a highly convincing manner the successive steps that have brought our Latin American relations to their present good estate. By the time Munich had startled us out of a false sense of security we had already built up a genuine common feeling throughout our hemisphere. And fortunately so. Only Argentina, which has shown herself to be the champion non-ratifier of all history, has consistently viewed us with suspicion and restraint. Her failure to break off relations with the Axis is entirely consistent with her attitude of the past few decades.

The United States has now reached the point where our dealings with our American neighbors can serve as a model for the world. We have rectified many past mistakes. We have abandoned the right of intervention.

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We have made heavy concessions in the interests of reciprocal trade. And if we continue along the line and at the pace of the past ten years we may indeed succeed in raising the living standards of the entire hemisphere. Our past record might indeed be worse; our present political attitude is exemplary.

Weighed in the Balance

IT WOULD SEEM that socialism had its chance in Western Europe and that it failed.

In 1931 socialist parties boasted no less than 26,000,000 supporters, and 1,300 socialists sat in the parliaments of European democracies. At one time or another during the 1918-'39 entr'acte socialist or labor parties (the English Labor Party might be described as very right-wing socialist) controlled the governments of Germany, Austria, Sweden, France, Spain and England.

And yet what happened, and who carried the day? Surely you remember the man with the funny little mustache, and we don't mean Charlie Chaplin.

Being himself a journalist of Austrian socialist origin, Adolf Sturmthal writes a book about this failure and calls it "The Tragedy of European Labor." Our own version of that tragedy would be that so much of European labor was able to find or to follow no more effective and enlightened leadership than these same socialists.

Mr. Sturmthal explains the failure on the ground that the socialists of Europe were not socialist enough. It seems that when they finally scaled the pinnacle of power, their knees shook at the realization of their own importance and they immediately began to compromise with the devils of capitalism.

In a sense this may be true. Since a socialist state will always be abhorrent to a large minority, if not an actual majority of the citizens, the only way for such a state to secure itself solidly is by the utterly ruthless and undemocratic methods that secured the Bolshevik régime in Russia. In Spain Largo Caballero's socialists announced their intention of trying the path of revolutionary dictatorship, but before they could get around to it Franco and his friends beat them to the draw.

(Whatever we may think of the Spanish dictator and his prolonged flirtation with fascism, in all honesty it must be said that Mr. Sturmthal, in his report of events between the elections of February, 1936, and the generals' uprising in July, unwittingly goes far toward justifying the Franco rebellion.)

But this kind of revolutionary socialism isn't what the author has in mind when he says that his European comrades weren't socialist enough. He thinks, in short, that socialism and democracy are entirely compatible and he looks forward to the day when, after an Allied victory, the marxists will be given another chance at the controls in Europe.

God forbid. Isn't it more than long past time, Mr. Sturmthal, that all you good-hearted, well-meaning humanitarians forgot about the sophomoric illusions of your Marxist youth? The great Negro scientist, George Washington Carver, said very eloquently and truly that "the world is perishing for kindness." It might also be said that the world is perishing for truth—for the full Christian truth, yes, but also for a little simple, elementary truth about the nature of property and power.

It is perishing for the common sense of Lord Acton when he wrote: "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely." Of Jefferson when he said: "He who has power over a man's living has power over his will." Of Eric Gill and the Popes when they pointed out that men work best, and can defend liberty, only when they control their own tools and materials.

Anti-Stalinist Marxists to the contrary notwithstanding, Russia is a thoroughly and consistently socialist state. If they want that, they can have it. If not, it would seem intelligent to mark off Marx in red ink and start all over again. It would seem intelligent to take the well-meaning Marx, put him with the well-meaning Adam Smith, and throw them both in the ashcan where reposes all that bankrupt, worn-out, tried-and-failed nonsense that has plagued the human race since those first days in Eden when man and his mate started looking for excuses not to stick to God's commandment.

But who is going to sell common sense to modern intellectuals and to modern workers? The Catholic Church? She too failed in Europe—and there indeed was the tragedy of that unfortunate continent. She hasn't begun—we haven't begun—to scratch the surface in America. Can it be that we just haven't got the vigor or faith or apostolic zeal that is needed for the job? Will the tragedy of European labor be succeeded by the tragedy of American labor? Once more, and loudly, "God forbid!"

We enjoyed reading Mr. Sturmthal's book. He is definitely anti-Catholic and he almost completely ignores the considerable efforts of the Church and its zealous champions in the Christian trade unions and such other bona fide labor movements as that of the Jocists. Nevertheless, the book stirred us up, made us think and made us sore. And we doubt if there is a more comprehensive, up-to-date work available on this extremely vital chapter of modern history. These are recommendations, and students of labor in particular are urged to consider them.

More Books of the Week

The Autobiography of a Curmudgeon. Harold L. Ickes. Reynal & Hitchcock. $3.00.

LIVELY is the word for Mr. Ickes's autobiography. He is so engrossed in the contemplation of his curmudgeonly traits—a sort of Narcissus in reverse—as to be continually dashing out of his narrative for the purpose of calling our attention to one or another of them. Yet we receive on the whole the impression that he is not such an unamiable curmudgeon, after all. What the facts of the matter are must be left to the determination of those who have had personal contact with him. We may, however, hazard the surmise that a man of such incorruptible honesty, accustomed for the better part of his life to dealing with corrupt politicians, may have acquired in his experience with them a technique which, if indiscriminatingly applied, might easily appear highly offensive to the average citizen. Hence (if we are right) his self-designation as a curmudgeon.

The chief value of Mr. Ickes's book resides in the picture it presents of city politics and politicians, both machine and reformist, over a considerable period of time. The city is Chicago, but the conditions he describes and the types of men who dominate or seek to control them are the same as those to be met with in any large American city. With individuals belonging to the professional element among the politicians Mr. Ickes often found, as had Lincoln Steffens before him, more points for human contact than among the reformers opposing them. This

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did not, however, affect his action in fighting to overcome the vicious system under which the machine operated. That the net results of these campaigns have proved to be something of a disappointment should not be allowed to obscure the value of the experience acquired in their waging. Through them, extended into the national field by the Bull-Moose movement of 1912, Mr. Ickes emerged a national figure.

Of this movement, and more especially of its collapse in 1916, we should have been glad to learn more than Mr. Ickes is willing to tell us. He blames its collapse upon George W. Perkins, financial backer of the movement in its prime. Of the part played in this by Theodore Roosevelt he is very discreet in his comment, allowing us to suppose that Roosevelt was never the same man after his return from the shattering experience attendant upon his discovery of the River of Doubt. The old curmudgeon reappears in his castigation of the younger Theodore.

Although an ardent Bull-Mooser to the bitter end and therefore a political opponent of Taft, Mr. Ickes sets the seal upon his own honesty by going out of his way to exonerate Ballinger, Taft's Secretary of the Interior, who was one of the main objects of the attack upon that Administration. Here is what he has to say on the subject: "When I came to Washington in 1933, I shared the practically universal opinion that Ballinger had personally benefitted from fraudulent practices, or at least had been so indifferent to the public welfare that he was unfit to hold office. I was convinced that he was guilty of maladministration and a lot of other things, among them conspiring to defraud the U. S. of valuable public lands. In due course (after I had full access to the records of the Department of the Interior) my associates and I, to our utter amazement, were forced, as a result of a thorough study by us, to the conclusion that Ballinger had been persecuted and unjustly driven from office as the result of a conspiracy, the center of which was Gifford Pinchot, at the time Chief Forester. The record convinced us that even though he had died a broken man, Ballinger was in fact an honorable and patriotic public servant."

Beyond defending himself for his conduct of the PWA and his later action in the oil and transportation shortages, Secretary Ickes has comparatively little to say of his contributions to the present administration. Perhaps he felt that would be bad taste, even for a curmudgeon. When he comes to retire perhaps he will tell us more. In particular we should like to hear his answer to the charge that his inherent honesty in the allotment of contracts was the cause of disastrous delays in the preparation of the national defense and other matters. At least, fortunately, we have been spared the scandals that have disgraced many previous administrations.

J. K. PAULDING.

What of the Night? Mrs. Belloc Lowndes. Dodd. $2.50.

IN THEIR attitude toward war publications people have fairly well divided themselves into two classes: first, those with a passion for what-is-it-like books, and second, those who fly from them as from a plague, lest vicarious horror disturb their comfort. Curiously, Mrs. Belloc Lowndes has written in "What of the Night?" seven war stories that will appeal to both types. Five of the stories are concerned with the bombing of England, and they are packed with grisly details. Yet a sense of horror is conspicuously absent. This effect of catharsis is only in some degree achieved by the art of the author. More certainly it can be explained by the fact that the

The Humanism of the Incarnation

"The Twilight of Civilization"—the pessimism of this title is only a relative pessimism. If twilight ushers in night, night itself precedes day. And in human history it often happens that the first rays of a dawn are mingled with the twilight.

In my mind the notion of the present trials endured by civilization is inseparable from that of a ***new humanism,*** which is in preparation in the present death struggle of the world, and which at the same time is preparing the renewal of civilization, even if it be only for the time that St. Paul predicts as a "resurrection from among the dead." . . .

The democracy which was misconceived and the humanism which miscarried, both proceeded from a closed ***anthropocentric*** inspiration that . . . denied . . . prayer, the evangelical virtues, supra-rational truths, the sense of sin and of grace and of the Gospel's beatitudes, the necessity for self-sacrifice and ascetic discipline, for contemplation, for the means of the Cross. . . .

Their fatal and fated progress through materialism, atheism, and anarchy—(bearing the mask of state despotism)—to a final dictatorship, we have traced. . . . We are witnessing the historical liquidation of the world of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and bourgeois democracy. Now a genuine, a real democracy must be built up. . . .

An integral humanism and an organic democracy, the Christian-inspired democracy of which the American episcopacy spoke, proceed from a ***theocentric*** inspiration. An integral humanism and an organic democracy respect human dignity . . . in each concrete living person, as he exists in his actual relationship to the community and in the historical context of his life.

Their aim is freedom of expansion for the person and they know that they will need all of human history to achieve the conquest of this freedom. . . . The ***principal*** thing for them in political work consists not in satisfying covetousness nor yet in external domination over material nature or over other peoples; but, rather, in the slow and difficult march toward an historic ideal of fraternal friendship among the wounded children of an unhappy species made for supreme happiness.

Finally, this democracy, and this humanism, just as they recognize the rights of the political community and of the political common good, recognize as well, ***and first of all,*** the rights of the family and the rights of the human person. And if you ask what these inalienable rights of the individual are, I shall quote to you the words of Pius XI in the encyclical ***Divini Redemptoris:*** "The right to life, to the integrity of the body, to the necessary means of existence; the right to march towards one's ultimate end in the path traced by God; the right of association, the right to the possession and use of property. . . ."

If the Western democracies are not to be swept away, and a night of long centuries is not to come down upon civilization, it is on condition that they discover in its primitive purity their vital principle, which is justice and love, and whose source is of divine origin. It is on condition that they reconstruct their political philosophy and thus rediscover the sense of justice and heroism in the rediscovery of God.

From THE TWILIGHT OF CIVILIZATION, by Jacques Maritain, Price $1.50

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war is here experienced through the ethos of the British people, protagonists who accept destruction as the backdrop against which life must still be lived with dignity, humor and courage. Human values persist in the foreground, no matter how loud the crack of doom. Yet the optimism is not superficial. This volume proves, moreover, what has been illustrated many times in the last two years—that the war tends to restore to the short story a substance without which it was fast becoming an attenuated trifle.

SISTER MARIELLA, O.S.B.

A History of Poland. O. Halecki. Roy. $3.50.

WE ARE ENTERING the decisive phase of the contest for Europe, and this contest is for the mind and soul as well as for the ravaged body of this central continent. As the last hour strikes, the nazis are making a supreme effort to rally the European populations and are capitalizing to the limit on the boundary claims of Moscow. The ability of Berlin to inflame the rift between Moscow and the Polish government in recent weeks is also a move of far-reaching effectiveness in the Russian conflict which has, however, its deep roots in Poland's history. Both Germany and Russia have used Polish territory as their battleground. This age-long problem is just as pressing now as in the previous centuries.

This and other interesting facts of this kind can be learned from a study of the present work by one of Poland's most distinguished historians. There has long been need of a competent single-volume history of Poland. The present book, which carries the story to 1942, shows well how Polish history has been generally characterized either by inadequate political leadership or by lack of unity among the people in support of a leader gifted with vision. It is not a supremely happy story to relate. But Professor Halecki is a careful scholar who does not try to color the picture when, on many occasions, political ineptitude either of the leaders or of the people led to major or minor catastrophes. In fact, Halecki's actual verdicts cast little light especially in relation to the recent events, such as the subject of Poland and the Little Entente, Poland and Munich, the peculiar nature of the revised Constitution and the deeper motives behind the about-face of Warsaw's foreign policy in 1932. Fortunately, however, Beck is not defended and Pilsudski is treated with due measure of praise and blame.

Halecki is at his best when dealing with the most vital historical traditions of Poland's great centuries—even if those centuries are relatively distant. But the fact that they are the least known abroad is a good reason for Halecki to dwell upon them. In doing so Halecki has avoided the grave mistake, more manifest today than ever, of making the Partitions the center of the whole past history of Poland.

As a whole this is absorbing reading. Halecki has the knack of being informative without being stuffy. It is a book that merits a lot of praise. But a good bibliography would have been a helpful addition.

JOSEPH S. ROUCEK.

The Eternal Purpose. Compiled by Blanche Mary Kelly. Harpers. $1.50.

SERIES of verses from the Old and New Testaments arranged under such categories as "The Soul in Anguish," "Blessed Are They That Mourn," "The Resurrection and the Life," and so forth. To be read for encouragement and consolation. A good volume to have handy in ordinary times but particularly apposite right now.

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The Inner Forum

A Labor Apostolate to the North

SINCE the admirable Jocist movement in France and Belgium—perhaps the finest example anywhere in the world of the Church's apostolate among the workers—has been either wiped out, emasculated, or driven underground by the nazi tyranny, it is heartening to know that there is a flourishing branch of the same tree growing right here on this continent.

Among the young French-speaking workers of Canada and New England there are over 40,000 active Jocists, and in spite of the war a number of very successful congresses were held last summer to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the JOC's founding in Canada.

The name JOC comes from the words *Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne* (Christian Working Youth), and the movement dates from its founding by Canon Joseph Cardijn in Belgium shortly after World War I.

Young men and boys between 16 and 25 are admitted, and usually organized on a parish basis into small cells for training under a "militant" or lay leader and a chaplain. The method used is the old scholastic one of "observation, judgment, and action." The leader questions the young workers to draw out their observations as to the moral and material conditions in their homes, places of work, and neighborhood hangouts. With the help of the chaplain all then try to reach a sound, conclusive judgment on these conditions, and whenever it is found necessary a constructive course of action is decided upon and carried out.

How successful this technique has been may be judged from the fact of over 400,000 active Jocists in France and Belgium before the war, and from the words of Pius XI in addressing them: "Jocists, you are the glory of Jesus Christ! Your action is the highest form of Catholic Action in the Church!"

Headquarters of the Canadian movement are at 1037 St. Denis, Montreal, a five-story building where Chaplain-General Victor Villeneuve, O.M.I. (now lecturing in this country) is assisted by four other priests who devote full time to the work. The central office also employes 45 lay workers, young Catholics from all parts of Canada who work for little more than food, shelter and clothing. The Jocists maintain in addition a number of charitable projects for the benefit of sick or impoverished youth.

CONTRIBUTORS

George de SANTILLANA is teaching at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and contributes to *The Atlantic Monthly* and other periodicals.

J. L. BENVENISTI is the author of several books, including "The Iniquitous Contract."

Marta WANKOWICZ came to the United States after the invasion of Poland, and is now working for a professional magazine.

Paul VIGNAUX, former professor at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes in Paris, was educational director for the French Christian Trade Unions. His book, "Traditionalisme et Syndicalisme," has recently been published by Editions de la Maison Francaise in New York.

J. K. PAULDING contributes another of his reviews of current books.

Sister MARIELLA, O.S.B. compiled and edited "Great Modern Catholic Short Stories" for Sheed and Ward.

Joseph S. ROUCEK is chairman of the Department of Political Science and Sociology at Hofstra College, Hempstead, L. I.

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